



PUPPETRY JOURNAL



VOLUME VI — NO. 4

JANUARY—FEBRUARY - 1955

THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA

THE PUPPETEERS OF AMERICA is a national non-profit organization whose object is the improvement of the art of puppetry. The organization is governed by a national council elected by the membership.

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Contents

Puppet Ambassador to Mexico	Lewis Parsons	3
Movement Within Proscenium	Lea Wallace	6
For the Love of Punch	Herbert	8
Puppetry 700	Peg Blickle	9
Puppetry Feature Theme	Cathryn Sailor	10
Puppet Parade		12
The Bairds		12
Puppetry 700		12
Hansel and Gretel		12
George Latshaw		21
Dick Weston		22
Ask Us Another		23
Here and There		24
Festival 1955		27
Workshop 1955		27
All Kinds of Charlies		28
Punch's Mailbox	Rod Young	29
Cover Illustration	Doug Anderson	



Every Member Get A Member!

Puppet Ambassador to Mexico

Lewis Parsons

(Without knowing that we had quoted from a letter we had received, Lewis wrote this account of his trip to Mexico especially for the JOURNAL. Since there is no repetition, we know you will enjoy this even more than the first account).

Although Mexico is readily accessible to all, and a tour by automobile is a simple matter, it is none the less a foreign country and offers the universal difficulties of foreign travel. As the panorama unfolds of a different historical epoch, there comes at the same time the tantalizing desire to bridge the gap in understanding and establish a contact which will enable one to have a glimpse from the inside looking out as well as from the outside looking in.

When I smuggled our Rusty, the marionette clown, across the border, I insured the admittance of an international public relations puppet who was willing and able to do his bit for better understanding and friendliness between countries. We began at once at gas stations, restaurants, hotels, city squares, and country roadsides waving a friendly hand to the "good neighbors" who flocked to smile their appreciation. In fact, the appearance of the clown was the signal for a stampede. Rusty filled the gap and his brave smile dispelled the misunderstandings that might have occurred when I began these bold approaches.

To us who are victimized and enfeebled by the thousands of machines and gadgets connected with modern tense, super-civilized life, the impact resulting from a direct communication with a primitive people can be tre-

mendous. A great deal of our frustration and insecurity comes from our increasing dependence on mechanical aids. To me there is a beautiful sense of reassurance that comes from knowing people who live without money, without cars, fine homes, and all that accumulation of "things" which we feel so indispensable, and who maintain themselves by the efforts of their bare hands wrestling with the earth. It is like touching the very backbone of humanity and finding it to be solid and substantial.

I feel so strongly opposed to those tourists who race across Mexico in their fine cars so obsessed by their financial superiority that their eyes are blinded to everything but the annoyances to their comfort, and who, at the same time feel that they own everything and everybody. We took four days covering the two-day lap from Laredo to Mexico City trying to break through the wall of defense these people have raised against the tourist. Beneath the appearance of distrust, the annoying heckling and begging one soon finds the real quality of a people courteous, generous, unreservedly friendly and willing to meet you more than half-way.

At beautiful Valles, I noted how the better dressed children took the poor Indian ragamuffins by the hand to lead them to Rusty, a nice lesson in lack of social prejudice! Later that day in the mountain village of Jacala the clown's dance was accompanied by a hilarious musician playing on a crude bull's horn trumpet. Since it was Christmas Eve we passed out all our candy and Christmas cards to the children. Just before midnight we had another performance in the square in

front of the church at Zimapan, where the country people had gathered to warm themselves at open fires before the midnight mass.

Next morning we were along the roadside near Ixmiquilpan with cattle herders explaining puppets and learning in return for the intricacies of the Nahuatl language. I found at once that puppets were not new to these people. Even the humblest unlettered child knew the difference between a "titere" (puppet) and a "muneca" (doll).

It was quite natural that our puppet "contact man" would lead us to other puppets and puppeteers. Puppets are to be found in the village markets everywhere, simple clay figures held up by a single wire from the head, dressed in brightly figured cotton print. At the wholesale toy market in Mexico City one could buy them wired together by the dozen. These rows of brightly colored little figures hanging by the hundreds, or even thousands were a pretty sight in the booths at the outdoor market: nuns and priests, charros and chinas, skeletons and crocodiles, grotesque Pinocchios with their long rolled paper noses, and animal heads on human bodies.

Itinerant puppet tent shows are everywhere in Mexico, some simple, some, like the famous Rosete-Arranda troupe, on as grand a scale as a three ring circus. We found the big-top of Rosete-Arranda at a village near the Capitol. This company was formed as long ago as 1832 by four brothers, and has been operating continuously ever since. There are eight puppeteers, who double as stage hands and moving crew, trucks, and vans containing a puppet cast of 1500 figures and a repertoire of 80 plays besides a large assortment of variety acts, clown skits, and "spectacles." A two week's engagement means daily change of program with performances of two hours in length. All this is offered at

a price range of from 25¢ top in the "preferencia," to a 2¢ minimum in the bleachers where most of the audience sits.

Exploring backstage at our first visit was even more interesting than the performance. We were taken into the great van where the marionettes were carefully filed away in drawers and hung in compartments. Soldiers, devils, princesses by the dozens all beautifully costumed, realistically modelled little dolls with small features and glinting, jewel eyes, and tiny closefitting movable mouths. The glittering, be-jewelled costuming made then a delight to examine at close range. On the stage with scenery built to scale they looked more effective than one would expect. But the performance of the whole complicated machinery of puppetry seemed somehow outmoded and ineffective. The sound was raucous and over-lengthy dialog badly synchronized with movement. The audience was inattentive and listless. "Aladdin" with its dozen or more scene changes was only saved from dragging by the expert, instantaneous changes from a shallow stage to a deep one with the small figures moving in an illusion of illimitable space.

The earlier attempts of the Rosete-Arranda players were in presenting historical pageants and church allegories which answered a real need of the people. But although they have tried to be more entertaining, and to avail themselves of modern lighting, and sound, the approach has not been modified to meet changing needs. There is a feeling among the educated class in the capitol that puppets are an inferior and outmoded form of entertainment. The dilapidated condition of the stage and tent bore evidence that the organization is making its last stand among the villages driven farther and farther away from the center of culture.

In contrast, I found the puppeteers

and artists associated with our friend Roberta Lago using every means to make puppetry a vital force socially and artistically. Before studying the puppet characters themselves, I saw an exhibition of Lola Cueto's paintings typifying the symbolic and abstract forms she had derived from the rich treasures of Indian lore and customs. Thus I was better able to see the puppet as a concrete expression of real Mexican art.

I can never forget the vision of seeing Lola walk into the room with such a big armload of puppets that it took our combined aid to keep them from falling to the floor. Such an array of gleeful faces, such striking expressions that the little people seemed to be talking and acting even when they lay motionless on the table.

Mr. Lago has three troupes of four puppeteers each who aid in the work through the Ministry of Education visiting schools in the capitol and in all parts of the republic. He explained a little of the method used in stamping out illiteracy among the people in remote areas. "Of course a puppet cannot actually teach a child or adult to read," he said. "Our system was to have the puppets bring the audience into the dialog by making humorous errors in recognizing letters and words. Always there would be some in the group who would be able to correct the errors, and then others would catch on and join in the fun. Once a beginning was made, the ones who could not read would be encouraged to add to their knowledge."

In speaking of Indian lore and legend as a source of inspiration for puppet creation Mr. Lago said, "I love the Indians, I just can't help it, it is natural to me." And his obvious delight in the markets was catching. One could see the originality underlying the simple popular toys and other expressions of folk-art. How I envied his easy manner, friendly but not patronizing, and his ability to eat tortil-

las cooked in the streets. The things I saw best in Mexico were those seen on foot walking with Roberto taking time to examine and discuss every little thing along the way.

And so you see, mother, Rusty, and I had our good times and were kept busy enough. Every morning a little family of Indian children would be sitting on the balustrade near the parked puppet truck waiting for a possible glimpse of Rusty, the children in the park by the hotel would be ready to show us their singing games, and give us another Spanish lesson. Then we would venture forth into new territories such as waving from the prow of a "lancha" in the canals of Xochimilco, greeting the gaily dressed families on the plaza at the Cathedral or the Shrine of Guadalupe.

We climbed the terraced streets at Acapulco shaking hands with the naked children, dodging the goats and pigs in the narrow streets, bowing to the ancient grandmothers smoking fat cigars. We found ready entry inside people's homes, paid our respects to the families making clay figures at Metepec in their low-ceilinged huts, sought out the rare house with pianos and encouraged the lucky few children who were sturging piano or dancing. Rusty was a favorite with policemen and taxi drivers, and had the dubious honor of dancing a free performance accompanied by a village band who afterwards demanded a round of drinks for their services, and cheered on a hilarious truckload of workmen who were changing a tire for us on the road to Veracruz.

Our adventures were varied, instructing, amusing, sometimes annoying, but always strenuous. We returned to home territory in safety thinking of nothing better than to repeat the experience as soon as we can retrench and fortify ourselves for another more complete invasion this time with more puppets and with a still wider field of activity in view.

Movement Within Proscenium

Lea Wallace

It was during the past Festival (June 1954) and following our (G. and L. Wallace) lecture and demonstration on "choreography for puppets" that Vivian Michael approached us concerning this article on choreography.

In its literal definition choreography means 'to compose a ballet' or 'arrange a dance.' This is a limited definition. Dance in the Theatre is a more integrated art form. The choreographer's chore is no longer limited to a formal dance (complete in itself) or a ballet merely as relief from a tense but static scene or an overlong talky sequence, — he must skillfully manipulate all figures within the proscenium to conform to and heighten the psychological overtones of the production. The manner in which a puppet actor crosses the stage, his pictorial relationship to the others, both in formal tableau or in informal grouping, affects the emotional quality of the play. Examples of this type of directing were seen at the Festival in the Jacoby's production and in the Beaton's "Mayflower Mouse."

Before a puppeteer begins to choreograph he must consider how his actors and dancers are constructed. You can not make a puppet do acrobatics if he is strung or constructed for a simple dramatic role with limited gestures. A human actor or dancer prepares himself with "techniques." Costume and equip your puppet accordingly, so it can be manipulated to the point where maximum movement for the particular role can be achieved.

Whether the effect is to be accomplished through music, percussion, sounds and noises or just silence is another important question to be settled before choreographing. It is sim-

pler to design movement to music already composed. Music with a definite beat and a change in mood will help dictate the action. Then there is the ballet or "story in dance." It is similar to opera in technique. This can be a full program with a few short diversifications. In this case the dance or ballet can be completed before the composer is called in to write the score. If a production has used a musical theme throughout, silence can be effective for a limited dance sequence. This is difficult unless the operator is skilled and knows how to build dramatically with movement and rhythmic pattern. Percussion or the use of drums, sticks, rattles, gongs, (anything that makes sound) is also effective when the beat is insistent. (I would like to refer readers to Lewis Parson's mimeographed list of musical suggestions, 35¢ from the JOURNAL, and to Russel Records for New Dance Routine Releases, including tap, clog, soft-shoe and Spanish ballet, - address Box 328, Ventura, California). There is a most worthwhile article by Anne Thurman in the May-June 1954 issue of the JOURNAL. This is one group's battle with choreography. Technical instruction in choreography becomes too involved for the average puppeteer. They can not hope to become proficient in every phase of the theater, so non-technical articles like Anne's are invaluable to the beginner . . . yet embody valuable suggestions for the more proficient.

The rudiments of choreographic design can be studied in some of the simple folk and square dances, based on a simple pattern known as the A B A form, — a quiet beginning, a more intricate middle and a quiet end-

ing. The Vellemans gave an excellent performance of charming folk dances at the Festival. Folk and ballroom dances should not be too difficult to simulate with puppets. Frank Paris gave a most adept exhibition of a ballroom dance couple at the Mardi Gras.

Ballet, Modern, Primitive and Ethnic are some of the major dance divisions. Ballet is classic and formal compared to the free barefooted and more creatively stark movements of the modern dance. For those who take their choreography seriously we recommend seeing some of the dance troupes that have visited our country recently from Europe and the Far and Near East, — Legong Theater from Bali, Kahilci from Japan, Shan Kor and others from India, the Sadler Wells, the French Theater specializing in Pantomime, and the Greek Theater with the great Kateria Paxinori replete with a chanting and dancing chorus. Excellent examples of primitive dancing come from the Caribbean.

Most documentary films include dance sequences from all over the world. The Disney documentaries have had animals, birds, insects and even flowers (all alive) dance. All the above suggest good points of departure for the puppeteer. In addition are the schools of dance, TV shows, books, photographs, magazines (DANCE and NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC), museums (painting and sculpture). Milwaukee Art Institute had a music and dance art show last fall. All these offer inspiration for both your puppets and their dances. For rental of dance films, write for a catalog to D. D. Livingston, 349 E. 45th St., N. York 36. For Dance Choreography read, Louis Horsts PRECLAS-SIC DANCE FORMS. I must also point to Ed Johnson's example of primitive choreography in his Indian saga, "The West Wind," presented at '54 Fest.

Time spent in this research will be

rewarding to both you and your audience and a contribution to the puppet theater. When you have observed a dance that you would like to duplicate think of the overall characteristics rather than individual steps or minute gestures. Try to simulate the broader body movements and three dimensional directions accomplished with turns and spins. Accomplish this by adopting proper stances, gestures, swaying movements, pulsations and vibrating or staccato movements of the puppet torso.

Skillful costuming can infinitely enhance the dance movement of a puppet. Filmy, frothy fabrics, billowy feathers, fringes, scarves, full circular (weighted) skirts, long sleeves and sparkles (rhinestones, sequins and beads) all add to the action of the puppet.

For night clubs and variety shows, an A B C routine is practical. A is the introduction, B is the complication of the A theme and C is the acceleration of B to a loud and fast finish. Another idea is a medley of tunes with three different tempos unified by a basis underlying motif. Walton and O'Rourke have a production called "Birth of the Blues," which starts with an African ritual, proceeds to spirituals, and continues on to the beginning of Jazz. Gia and Lea Wallace use a medley of Latin American rhythms, start with a bright Samba into a slow tango and wind up with a raucous Conga. Whatever you choose, the movements should be definite, and the routine tried again and again to weed out extraneous and superfluous action until it becomes strong and sure fire for applause before either a blase' or uninitiated audience.

In classic dramatic productions such as Shakespeare, the court dances must be in keeping with the period. In modern dramatic plays such as "Camino Real" by Tennessee Williams, the movement continued the story

line. It can intensify situations as well. Dancing has become important to the Metropolitan Opera, and has been used with impact in modern opera including Menotti's operas. Comic relief, so important to a tense situation can be accomplished by slap stick, burlesque or satirical dances. In children's plays, ghost, witches and creatures of the nether world can be best depicted by their eerie movements, floating through space on brooms, pitchforks or beams of light. Then there are the elves and woodland sprites bouncing airily from toadstool to flower in a gay, bouyant, mischievous spirit. Flashbacks and dream sequences can be expressed by undulation motion in a dreamy slow motion.

It is the puppet's birthright (when it is in the best interest of the puppet production) to distort and contort himself, to defy gravity, to disappear

suddenly and appear again like a genii. The puppet can share his exhilaration or depression with his puppet props and scenery. Why shouldn't a tree sigh and sway and "lift her leafy arms to pray." Walter Wilkinson used to have his scenery take a bow along with the rest of his cast. Milovsoroff writes about an approach to puppets from the purely creative angle, uninhibited by convention. I feel that his abstract ballet to the "Nutcracker Suite" is an inspirational breath of sheer puppetry.

So, let's try to raise the standards of quality, be consciously aware of theater, — it is all within a prosenium, whatever its dimensions of breadth or greatness, for "The Earth spinning on its tilted axis and in turn spinning around the Sun, produced the first Dance Drama, "The Cycle of the Seasons."

For the Love of Punch

Herbert

With the advent of television, puppets suddenly received incredible popularity. In spite of all this, one member of the puppet family, a venerable old timer, has not been given the credit due him, — namely, Mr. Punch. Throughout the years, Punch and his good Dame Judy, aided by such illustrious names as Dave Lano, George Larsen, Prince Buddna, Benny Bernard, Bill Styles, Tommy Arenx and Lew Alter (to mention a few) have been doing their best to keep the natives puppet conscious, going into the hinterlands to charm young and old with their delightful antics. I am just a youngster among these old timers, but I gave my first "Punch" show over three decades ago on a circus side-show.

Punch has always been an institution on the circus bill, and I believe, always will be. He will always be in demand. Read "BILLBOARD" any week before and during the outdoor show season and you will find not one but several ads reading, "WANTED—Punch man," or "WANTED—Magician, one with Punch preferred." The old roue has been no stranger to the audiences of the fast fading "Medicine" shows, the "Rep" shows, the "Showboat" and the long gone "Tab" shows.

With out belittling puppetry in any form, I love it all, we must admit that Punch has some advantages. Puppet presentations in other forms must be adapted to the audiences. Punch meets all comers, young or old, the so-called common man, the elite or

whom have you. Let's hope that we "Punch-sters" can help him accomplish this for many years to come.

I really love the old fellow, —no-no—, I should not call him old. Punch has learned the secret of eternal youth. So be it!

And now to another matter. In the late thirties, before Uncle Sam requisitioned five years of my life, I started gathering material for an opus (????) to commemorate Punch, outdoors, together with his partners in crime, the "Punch-sters." I have spent a lot of time (too much) since coming out of the service in V. A. hospitals and have done little work on it. Now, I hope my condition will permit me to work on it again, half speed, at least. I hope to include all Punch

workers. If any one has material, biographical, historical, pictorial or any information about the American Punch operators, I will appreciate the opportunity to include it in this book. I will appreciate it immensely and will welcome correspondence with all Punch workers and all those interested. Address me: Herbert, P. O. Box 221, Tilden, Illinois.

NOTE: Bob Longfield, Galahad Road, Hudson, Wisconsin, is still trying desperately hard to complete material for the book which was to be a memorial to the late Lem Williams. Jokes, funny stories about puppets, odd incidents, humorous things that have happened to you . . . all will help him complete his task. Please take this appeal seriously and help him!

Puppetry 700

Peg Blickle

Ohio State University's Speech Department introduced a new course this fall, "Puppetry 700." To the students 700 means "Graduate students only," but the word "puppetry" actually didn't mean much. They knew what puppets were and most of the students were interested in theatre so they connected puppets with the theater. Twelve graduate students in theatre took the plunge. They signed up for the four-hour course!

From the beginning of the quarter, they were fascinated and fascinating students. We started out trying to familiarize them with puppets — all types and all kinds. This was done with pictures, slides, books, shows, and models. Viv helped out with material and the Zangers (Mimi Proctor and her husband) gave a charming Punch and Judy show. After the first two weeks, the whole class was delighted but a bit skeptical on what they could do.

It was decided to start out with Aladdin more because we felt that the boys who were in the class could better manage the Oriental costumes and also the idiosyncrasies of the marionette walk could be better covered. The format for the show was a combination of ideas. Each student had to read the story and write a format. Since a good deal of time had been spent emphasizing the importance of action and the advantages of imagination, its barely possible that Scheherazade would never have recognized her story. But the added touches helped make the production a distinct hit.

Each student made at least one marionette and one "out of this world" puppet, they called them. Many of them also found time to make one or two fist puppets.

They designed and executed the sets which were very outstanding. They planned the music and the

lighting, and two of the boys built the marionette stage. This was really a terrific program to finish in one quarter and took hours of extra time and about the only thing they didn't find time for was rehearsal. That was skimpy; however two productions of the show went off very well with very few hitches and the audiences were delighted. Their delight was certainly shared by the neophytes on the bridges, and when the children flocked back stage to see and talk about the puppets, the members of the class felt repaid for all the extra time and energy that they had put into their project.

It was a very satisfying teaching activity also. To experience with the student his happiness and satisfaction with something that he has created; to see his confidence grow and his interest in the art expand is worth

a great deal to a teacher.

The course has made a great many friends for puppetry, not only the 12 students, but also many of their friends who want to sign up for the course this quarter. The Speech faculty was amazed at the interest in the subject and the theater faculty saw in the art some new experimental work that could be carried out in this field. The audience, made up mostly of faculty children and students — many who had never seen a marionette show — requested repeat performances of Aladdin and voiced a hope that the class would go on and present other shows.

Since Ohio State is on the brink of establishing its own TV station, we are looking forward to making puppets on TV part of the course next fall.

Puppetry Feature Theme

Cathryn Sailor

At the recent Louisiana Education Association Convention in Monroe, the LEA Art Section chose Puppetry as its feature theme for meetings and programs. One of the most popular presentations was, of course, a puppet show. In this very attractive Variety Show papier mache marionettes, which they and school-mates had made, were operated by West Monroe High School pupils directed by their Art teacher, Mrs. John Platt. The manipulation was especially good; and the show well presented in spite of the handicap of limited space. All seats were taken long before performance time; and a surprising number of people were both willing and insistent about standing at the back of the room during the hour long performance. It was a mutual disappointment

that many more had to be turned away at the door.

Another well-received program highlight was a documented exhibit emphasizing puppetry in education. This effective display was prepared in the Art Department of Louisiana Polytechnic Institute in Ruston. A member of this college art faculty is Mark Harris, Art Section program chairman for the 1954 Convention and newly-elected president of the organization for 1954-5. In his capacity as program chairman, it was he who had most to do with choosing the theme and arranging everything presented. Mr. Harris presided during a lively and informative discussion: IMPLICATIONS FOR USE OF PUPPETS AT ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL LEVELS. Among art films shown

which particularly appealed to our audiences was one on hand puppet construction, a Bailey film, MAKING A PUPPET. Actually this is not the first time that puppetry has been on our program. For the past four years it has had some part, though it never has been featured to this extent so far as I know.

The LEA Art Section has been trying to become definitely of service to related fields and, particularly, to present at each convention as much as possible which might be interesting to general education and to elementary classroom teachers, in particular. At the same time we have been trying to present a program which has some value to those of us who are special art teachers or supervisors at various levels. A service which necessarily is limited for distribution to our membership is an annual IDEA EXCHANGE; a mimeographed collection of suggestions which also feature the general program theme. In addition to our own efforts, we have this year invited and received a generous array of materials from many of you Puppeteers. We are grateful to Mrs. Wesley Wiksell, Miss Rena Prim, Mrs. Vivian Michael, Mr. and Mrs. Basil Milovsoroff, Mr. Budd Gambee, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Entrikin, Mr. Lawrence Maxwell, and Miss Clara Wiltse. It is both a delight and a regret to report that such a tremendous quantity of information was received that it proved impossible to mimeograph all of it in time for distribution at the Convention; however, the remainder has been prepared since and sent out by mail. Thanks to each one of you.

Influence defies measurement. I have been aware of the several effective contributions which your organization previously has made in Louisiana. Things which I know about, I mean; there likely have been others. Some of the strongest ripples surely have come forth from the 1952 Festi-

val in Baton Rouge. Another thing which tremendously interested me and which, I have been told, has had a great deal to do with the exceptional depth of puppetry appreciation in Monroe was a workshop put on there by Romain Proctor. I don't know Mr. Proctor; I don't know when this happened; it is evident that he did a good job. Another radiating influence has come from the puppetry service offered to their communities by the Shreveport and New Orleans Junior Leagues.

I know that I am not much of a Puppeteer, myself; I also know that I am proud to be listed, however, as a "least" member of your organization. Whatever your group may have been in years gone by, I don't know. Currently, your spirit and cooperative effort offer refreshing challenge to other organizations to "straighten up and fly right." Thanks for the intangible along with the rest.

In closing, let me mention that you really should see the puppetry activity percolating and circulating about Miss Drucilla Motley of Monroe. She and a group of friends who are members of a club there not only have been having genuine fun, they've been making (genuine) money.

Really, aren't you P of A-ers just a little bit proud

Get a Member

A sample membership folder is enclosed with this issue. If you will use it to get just ONE new member we will not only make our quota but exceed it. Send to the Executive Secretary for additional folders. Here is a hearty thanks to those who have sent in new members recently, - they have really been piling in. The larger our membership, the stronger our organization. Will you help?



PUPPET PARADE

(see photo section)

THE BAIRDS

There are "Ups and Downs" in any TV career, but there never seems to be a "down" in the astounding Baird's career that doesn't provide the stimulation for another smashing success . . . this time "Babes in Toyland" which really gave the New York critics something to rave about. Read more about this in "Here and There," this issue.

PUPPETRY 700

Peg Blicke tell you about this exciting experiment conducted with a graduate class in theater at Ohio State University in "PUPPETRY 700" in this issue. Having seen the final production, we can say that it far surpassed her description. When twelve complete beginners can build a puppet show from "stage on" during one college quarter, and produce a unified, smooth running, ad-libbed production of an hour's length, they have accomplished little short of a miracle. To me it proved that the fundamental knowledge of theater which these kids had is after all the most basic element in producing a puppet production.

HANSEL AND GRETEL

Since Hansel and Gretel has been playing throughout the country you have probably been forming your own opinions about it. Personally we saw it immediately following "Lili," and after seeing the beautiful simplicity in story, settings, photography, and

the delightful "puppet-like" action of the puppets in Lili, it was hard to adjust to the raw color and the ever too busy backgrounds which distracted from the action of the puppets in "Hansel and Gretel." We felt the influence of Disney, without his artistry, throughout the play, and wished it could have all been more simple. There were moments when the puppets themselves were quite appealing, in spite of their half-human-half-puppet-like quality.

Last month we gave a most complimentary review of "Hansel and Gretel" which followed the pattern of most reviewers. However, not for his opinion of "Hansel and Gretel," but for his opinion of puppets in general, we think you might be interested in what Arthur Knight says in the SATURDAY REVIEW.

"I suppose it's only fair to introduce these comments on "Hansel and Gretel" (RKO) by admitting that I have always found puppets, whether on film or TV, singularly repulsive. Their jerking, awkward imitation of life, their immobile faces and dead eyes, the idiot voices that are somehow always affixed to them invariably leave me either frigid or frothing. So it is at best a rather left-handed compliment to note here that Michael Myerberg's puppets — "Kinemins," he calls them — move somewhat more smoothly than most, that their faces (though not the eyes) are reasonably animate, and that the voices are supplied by, among others, Anna Russell, the impeccable Mildred Dunnock, and Frank Rogier. Still one wonders, as puppets become more





The Bairds

Puppetry 700





O. S. U.



Hanse

Gre t



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Gretel







by

George Latshaw



Dick Weston



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and more lifelike, why didn't the producer just use people?

"In any case, this "Hansel and Gretel" has been adapted from the Humperdinck opera by Padraic Colum and introduces a new kind of electronically controlled, magnetic, plastic puppet. I derived some rather grim amusement from watching these little Kine-mins gesticulating operatically to Humperdinck's heavy, quasi-Wagnerian score, and a moment or two of real delight from Anna Russell's vocal calisthenics as the wicked witch, played with all stops out. But everything else about the production—the characters, the backgrounds, the story—is so sweet and conventional that I'm afraid I can recommend it only as something to take the kiddies to. And if you can get them there under their own power, so much the better."

GEORGE LATSHAW

We are always delighted to get a letter from George Latshaw because we know that whatever is in it, it will be something different. George is one of the few puppeteers that we know who believes enough in creative puppetry to "dare to be different." His "Jack and the Beanstalk" at Festival, which drew the highest praise and severest criticism of any show produced is proof that with a subject as hackneyed as "Jack and the Beanstalk" one can come up with an entirely new twist, if they have imagination and some creative ability.

Pictured here are two of his "flat puppets" devoid of the action which gave them dimension, - Jack listening to The Man Who Buys the Cow. In contrast are the two turned ball head puppets, reminiscent of Dr. Jan Malik who provided the inspiration for some of Marjorie Batchelder McPharlin's creations and the heads made by Gayle Michael Anderson for her "Commedia" which was part of her master's thesis. Entirely too little has

been done along this line. In the next issue of the JOURNAL you will hear more about this type of puppet. Joey and Dr. Tea-cup are featured in George's "The Runaway Rocket." His abstract creatures are even more imaginative, But we lack space for all the photos this time.

George's letter tells you better than I can how active he has been since Fest. He writes:

"Made a couple of semi-abstract puppets to introduce the children to the Children's Holiday Carnival at the Museum in Indianapolis - a clown and a cat, and wish I could get a hold of one of the new pictures which was fun. There were mobiles, play sculpture (from the Museum of Modern Art), some ceramic animals, and Basil's delightful bugs and beings in the bark roots (all displayed behind cages). The whole exhibition was a delight to behold, and was a great credit to John Brown, their curator of education, who had things arranged so the children could actually touch and create things of their own while they visited the exhibit. Some marvelously funny Miro's too. Did "The Runaway Rocket" there one week-end just after their exhibition opened.

"Started working with the Cleveland Jr. League this fall on a project in connection with the Cleveland Music School Settlement. They're doing deFalla's "Master Peter's Puppet Show" . . . so naturally I was keen to read your piece by Bufano on the last issue. As far as I know, his puppets were the only ones to perform it in this country . . . Little Orchestra Society did a revival of it several years ago (after Bufano's death, I believe). In order to get puppets large enough to be seen well in the Music Hall Little Theatre, I decided to stage it with the Sicilian-type overhead (or from above) rod puppets. The script calls for hand puppets, but since our cast will have humans in the human roles, the puppets will

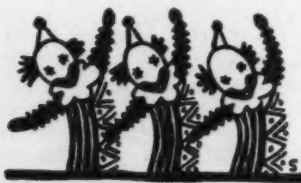
have to be huge. Three and a half feet high for the men.

"Remember seeing a single-performance revival of this type of show by the Manteo family, and how exciting it was in the battle scenes (particularly when one of the knights slashed a huge gash in the scenery during a spectacular fight), and that had the sort of gusto I think this show requires. Naturally, the Jr. League Gals can't heft 150 pound puppets, so they're all made of paper and cardboard, which, so far, is turning out quite well. They're not strictly paper mache, because there wasn't the time for modeling, and all that mess, and the direct approach seems to hold up just as well. Hooray for resin glue and paper!

Just got the word today that I'll be playing at the Detroit Institute of Art on January 22, 23, and will be eager to see all those nice people up there again.

DICK WESTON

Dick Weston of Minneapolis, Minn., suggests that we "put all puppeteers in a huge bowl and stir until they get the yen to create ventriloquist figures." He deplores the lack of variety in vent figures (we do to) and attributes this to the fact that few ventriloquists can create their own but are dependent upon the few vent manufacturers who turn them out "factory fashion." Dick's first figure, Eddie O'Connor was a creation of Martin Stevens, but with the help of the late Lem Williams and John Shirley, Dick now comes forth with his first two "brain children," Aunt Martha and Horatio. Nice going, Dick! We too would like to see more creative figures in the vent profession . . . and fewer "little Charlies." Edgar Bergen, by the way, did a nice job on "What's my Line?" recently.



Ask Us Another

(By the Journal Editors)

QUESTION . . . Can you give me the name of the white adhesive or paste that we used at Western College Institute? I remember that it worked equally well on wood, leather or cloth, and did not make the fabric stiff.

ANSWER . . . The one Olga Stevens used, I believe, was Mighty-Bond, and can be purchased from United Paste and Glue Co., 40 Renwick St., New York City. Only catch is that you have to buy in gallon lots at about \$6.00 per. However it is worth every

cent of it. Get some one to share it with you and divide. We also used Casco and Elmer's Glue-all that year, both products of Borden Co., but neither was quite as satisfactory as Mighty-Bond . . . especially for fabrics . . . and wigs. Testor's airplane cement will answer for many purposes . . . find it in any hobby shop or 10¢ store. No good for fabric.

QUESTION . . . I can't buy the plastic wood solvent you recommend for softening and cleaning up plastic wood in my town. Is there any substitute?

ANSWER . . . Yes, a fair one . . . lacquer thinner. Not quite as effective but it will answer the purpose.

QUESTION . . . The JOURNAL is wonderful and certainly the answer to every puppeteer's prayer, but . . . I'm a beginner and a teacher, - I need a specific help with puppetry problems for my lower grade youngsters . . . won't you ask someone to write articles just especially for us?

ANSWER . . . We have worried about that situation too. Here is your chance, teachers, tell us how you do it . . . maybe it will help another member. Maybe teachers feel that among so many puppeteers, they are not qualified to write about puppetry, but we assure you that your suggestions will be mighty welcome. However if you need specific help with your problem, write to Fern Zwickey, Educational Consultant . . . see address on title page. In the meantime, we will keep on hoping that others in the educational field will respond.

QUESTION . . . I want to make a switchboard for my marionette stage . . . about ten or 12 outlets . . . compactness not absolutely essential. Where can I find directions?

ANSWER . . . Page 182 of Marjorie Batchelder's PUPPET THEATER HANDBOOK, published by Harpers, has the diagram of a switchboard I designed about 10 years ago, but it has been practical and indestructible, and not hard to construct. The drawing has one slight error due to copying, but you will easily detect it when wiring. I know of no other drawing available at present. Any one have suggestions?

QUESTION . . . An impertinent question, maybe, but why don't professional puppeteers who write their own plays so successfully write plays for publication? Other play writers

in the legitimate theater make their scripts available to the public. Are puppeteers just plain selfish? Egotistical or what?

ANSWER . . . First, if you are making a living with puppets, you are too busy! Second, the limited demand for the play would not justify the expense of publication, and how else could it be made available to the public. Third, I'd like to correct your impression that puppeteers are selfish. I have found the professional puppeteers the most generous people on earth. As evidence, recall what you have learned from professionals at past Festivals! Or recall how professional puppeteers on the road have let you come back stage and practically dissect every puppet and prop to find out what made them tick. I know of no other group on earth who will divulge the last secret of their profession like the professional puppeteers do, and DO IT GRACIOUSLY!

To others who asked about scripts this month, the JOURNAL has no answer. That question has plagued us from the beginning. "Sources of Plays" by Alfred Wallace, (25¢ from the JOURNAL) lists practically all plays in print or out that have ever been written and published especially for puppets. Aside from this, we have nothing to recommend. We will welcome any play writers who can help.

QUESTION . . . Is there a satisfactory substitute for plastic wood?

ANSWER . . . John Shirley used the wood paste product manufactured for Sears Roebuck and found that it worked fairly well. However, we see no reason for using a substitute, - plastic wood is a perfect medium and is not too expensive if purchased in large quantities. We do not recommend any substitute to give the same satisfaction.

Here and There

This last Xmas was full of puppet spirit in many places. It's the season when puppeteers find themselves presenting not only commercial shows but also charity shows—maybe they shouldn't be called charity shows because they often give as much pleasure to the recipients—children's hospitals, children's homes, the handicapped, the old people's homes—as they do to the puppeteers themselves. The list of puppeteers who give and receive such pleasure during the Yuletide season must be tremendous.

Among those puppeteers who dedicate themselves to giving shows and funds to the handicapped is Burton Wolfe of 80 Scarcliff Drive, Malverne, Long Island. He is a 13 year old with a mother and father who are definitely interested in his puppet career and who encourage him to give his one-man shows. In the last five years he has earned over \$1000, most of which has been turned over to charity.

Christmas is over but the melody of many puppet shows still lingers on. Anyone spending Xmas holidays in New York could have seen a show a day. The Village Dance and Puppet Center, 430 Sixth Street, presented "Adventures in Space," "Adventures of Sinbad," "Funny Sunny Bunny." Lea and Gia Wallace offered "Goober's Christmas" and "Santa's Human Surprises" at the Club Cinema. The New York Public Library included several puppet shows on their Xmas agenda: "Perez and Martina" by Pura Belpre; "The Reluctant Dragon" by Kenneth Grahme, and Gian-Carlo Menotti's "Amahl and the Night Visitors." The Brooklyn Academy of music offered "The Boy Who Found Christmas." Suzari Marionettes were presenting "Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp."

Then as you all probably know there were all kinds of puppet TV fare to see as "Twas the Night Before Christmas" and "The Nativity" sponsored by the telephone company presented by Mabel Beaton Marionettes, on December 19.

Surely we all joined hearts and minds on Sunday, December 25, over ABC TV, when we saw Burr Tillstrom's excellent production of James Thurber's, "Many Moons." Nine puppet characters—Burr's nine distinctive voices—enchanted puppets, plenty of action on a set which spanned twenty-six and half feet constructed on two levels, beautiful humor and satire, simple terrific theatre. Just in case you don't know the story—it's a wonderful spoof on fairy tales with a priceless scene between the court jester and a malaprop goldsmith. The tongue-in-cheek tale is about a king (He looked a bit like Groucho Marx) who discovers that the three wisest men in the kingdom, the lord high chamberlain, the royal wizard and the royal mathematician—each half dead or half blind who promise all sorts of impossible things—are at a loss to deliver the moon to the ailing princess. The jester (Guess who plays the part? Kukla, of course.), a man of common sense gets the princess the moon which for her is only a tiny golden object caught in the branches of the tree. The production was just right for Christmas.

Hope you saw "Babes in Toyland" over NBC on Saturday evening, December 19, with a whole bevy of big name television stars, but shining above and beyond—and way beyond—were the Bairds' puppets. Even though there were parts of the show that were stunningly executed many of the live actors, if not all, had a

difficult time keeping up with the Baird manipulated performers. Perhaps this is a bit prejudiced or unfair because obviously the producer, Max Liebman, was trying to do a bit of streamlining and trying to gear a children's vehicle to an adult audience; consequently his live show didn't quite make it. He might have done better to have turned the whole script over to Cora and Bil Baird whose animated figures of toys and animals were the complete embodiment of delightful fantasy—humorous, imaginative and beguiling lifelike. The Bairds have the gifts of combining the disarming innocence of childhood with the right touch of adult wit. In the familiar "March of Toys," for instance, the puppet soldiers were far more intriguing—and had infinitely more precision—than the complementary corps of humans costumed as soldiers. Perhaps color improved the show for those who saw it in that medium, but I suspect that most of us saw it in black and white.

Did you, by any chance, note the characteristic VARIETY headlines, page 34, November 10, 1954, "CBS—TV Plays Palsy With Paar as Bairds Get Lop Off Treatment"? Typical of the rapid switch of TV, the Bairds dropped by Jack Paar's CBS "The Morning Show" were immediately signed to Dave Garroway's "Today," NBC. Actually Paar declares that he had nothing to do with the decision to release the Bairds. In fact, he insists he was one of their best boosters both on and off the air. He lists them as "tremendous artists" and "we have worked together in harmony and mutual regard and I would welcome an opportunity to work with them again." But maybe its the kind of "break" that's for the Baird's good. It's reported that they've signed up for four Max Liebman's "spectaculars" (Babes in Toyland, the first) with options for ten more. They also hope to revive their "Whistling Wizard" kid show.

According to our reports, it looks like the Twin City Puppeteers organization is leaning a bit toward the social side. No doubt, Bob Lonfield, their President, will keep them in tow and see that the puppets keep the upper hand (no pun). They're always meeting and eating. Sounds like fun! Dutch treat dinners to which they bring their puppets; a smorgasbord featuring Helen and Gilbert White with their puppet heads modeled under the direction of TV puppet showman, Noubun Yomane for the folk-tale Wiashima Taro, and our last report is Christmas party at the Red Owl Restaurant, December 28, complete with Christmas decorations, food and spirit. The feature entertainment consisted of acts by the guests who had brought with them their puppet friends.

Some of you are probably interested in films that can be obtained to show a marionette production. We have announcements of several: Twenty-six minutes of how art serves the school curriculum climaxed by a children's marionette version of "Saint-Saen's Carnival of Animals." (United Films, 1445 Park Avenue, New York.

There is also a series of sound color 16mm. motion picture featuring the Salzburg marionettes and their production of "Rapunzel," "The Snow Maiden," "Hansel and Gretel" and "Snow White and Rose Red." The films are available for rental or purchase and appropriate for four to ten-year-olds. Trident Films Inc., 510 Madison Ave., New York, 22, will furnish you with further details.

Although Christmas is over for the moment, we can't help mentioning that Athena Films, 165 West 46th Street, New York, has a 16 mm. 13-minute film "The Santa Claus Suit." Most of you know Olga and Martin's two puppets Spots and and Stripes and you would enjoy this film where Stripes declares to Spot as they prepare for Christmas that he must see

Santa Claus or he will not believe in him. In order to satisfy his friend, Spots dresses up, but his deception is discovered and Stripes is disillusioned and angry with Spots. Later the discarded Santa Claus suit becomes animated and visits Stripes for a chat. In reply to the puppet's disbelief in the things that he can't see, the suit points out that many valuable things in life are unseen—wind, electricity, prayer and God—but people still believe in them. Stripes realizes that Spots desires to make him happy by dressing as Santa Claus is very real though intangible and in the true spirit of friendship and good will. Spots and Stripes are reconciled.

Have you read the book "Love of Seven Dolls" by Paul Gallico published by the Kansas City Star! Marge Kelly from Topeka, Kansas, and John Shirley from St. Paul currently in New York City have both recommended the book. It's a tale of a French girl's affection for the animated puppets of a carnival booth. Sounds somewhat like Lili but this is a tale of richer, deeper variety of emotions. The girl, Mouche, is naive, wistful and trusting to the principles of right and wrong. The girl emerges as a woman successfully crossing the bridge between love and hate for Capitaine Coq, the brilliant but disillusioned puppeteer.

Puppet wise there seems to be a lot going on in England. It would have been interesting to take in the Puppet Guild Exhibition and Model Theatre Guild which opened at the Royal Hotel Woburn Place, November 1 through November 6, 1954. This organization is 30 years old next year, starting in 1926 when it presenting an arrangement of a survey of the then two juvenile drama publishers. The Guild now especially excels in Juvenile Drama and to some extent keeps it alive. It might be remembered that apart from its sentimental and decorative attractions, the Juven-

ile Drama has marked value in the contribution it makes to theatrical history since to some extent it is a pictorial record of the plays and players and varying forms of entertainment of the first half of the 19th century. Some of us know this art as the toy theatre. Other than the Juvenile Theatre much of the exhibition space was given over to puppets and their settings. One of the speakers, Mr. Madden, a veteran of all Guild Exhibits, made a speech revealing that he regarded all puppeteers as kind of Peter Pans. "All puppeteers are charming, never grow up and never have any money." Most of us ascribe to the last statement and would like to believe in the first two. Continuous performances of puppet shows were given throughout the week by a long and impressive list of British puppeteers.

We're not sure whether "The Punch Review," a production showing English life as seen by Mr. Punch from Cruikshank to Mr. Ronald Searle which was planned for New Years at the Royal Court Theater was presented or not. Sounds like something for an Englishman or an American to see.

A controversy is proving that history really does repeat itself. The city councilors at a well-known sea shore resort, Worthing, find that Sunday shows of Punch and Judy are unwholesome for that day. Apparently they don't believe that Sunday is a day of recreation.

Puppets have also stirred up quite a commotion at Coventry. It seems that one of the large stores established a marionette theatre (Alexandra's Marionettes) on the balcony of Broadgate House in the center of the city covering it with tarpaulins and adding illuminated Christmas decorations. The City Planning and Redevelopment Committee took exception to the tarpaulins calling them eyesores. Since the department store had already planned a number of children's

parties featuring puppet shows, the committee was labeled "old meanies" and "kill joys." In fact, they got such a Scrooge-like reputation that they hurriedly called a meeting with the Department store to see if something couldn't be done. That's where we left them! Mr. Alexander who runs the puppet show is a veteran of a

number of professions. Among them he has an act of performing mice and has tamed lions. Maybe he'll find these two professions less entangling than that of puppeteering for a squabbling department store and city committee.

Thanks to all who answered our appeal for news.

Festival 1955

June 28, 29, 30 . . . July 1

Festival this year is trending in a slightly different direction. The Saturday Workshop program will free the regular program of many demonstrations and give more time for shows, forums and panels on vital subjects such as, "How to Make a Living with Puppets," "How to Create and Produce a Dance Routine," "How to Dir-

ect a Puppet Show," "How to Tape a Puppet Show" and many other kindred subjects. Archie is trying to make this program the kind of program you have asked for. If you have any suggestions as to subject or personnel for programs or shows, Archie would welcome them.

Workshop 1955

This year, in an effort to bring the latest in puppetry techniques and information to both professional and amateur puppeteers, your Council has decided to present a one-day Workshop instead of the eight-day Institute. Too many have felt they could not afford the time or money for the Institute, thus its services have only been available to a fraction of the membership. By making this change your Council feels that every one who attends the Festival can avail themselves of this opportunity. The expense will be very nominal, a small fee to cover expenses.

The Workshop, on Saturday following the Fest, will consist of an all day program with continuous demonstrations in all phases of puppetry tech-

niques and production. It is expected that as many as twenty five demonstrations will be conducted simultaneously and will be repeated all day long, affording every one an opportunity to spend some time with each or concentrate on those they need most.

A Handbook of the Workshop will be available for each member who remains for the Workshop. This will enable them to take home in notebook form a complete summary of the demonstration.

Lewis Parsons is in charge of the Workshop. His demonstrators will be announced in a later issue of the JOURNAL.

Archie Elliott

All Kinds of Charlies

Vent figures are used extensively and in every type of profession. Everyone is familiar with the figure on TV or perhaps on the stage, but not everyone realizes that ventriloquism is carried into all kinds of work.

In Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, at the Sheraden Terrace Methodist Church Reverend Gerald Bonney uses his wooden headed pal, Jerry, to lure the children to Sunday School. He tells the small fry stories from the Bible, quizzes them, answers their questions, and carries on dialogues with the minister. Sometimes the two sing hymn duets, Jerry taking one line and the pastor taking the next.

Bonney and Jerry have been partners for 20 years, and the minister is convinced his methods of Bible teaching are more effective than traditional ones. Born in South Paris, Maine, he studied for the ministry at the Gordon College of Theology and Missions in Boston, Massachusetts. As a hobby he studied magic and ventriloquism. When he became pastor of the Pittsburgh church, some of the parents objected to Jerry as a mouthpiece. But their criticism vanished when they noticed how the once inattentive pupils became the star members of the streamlined Sunday-School class.

In the Illinois State Normal University, an art student, Ralph Reynolds, plans to use his vent figure, Randy Riggins to help him put over his educational ideas on the students. He figures that the children in the class room will listen more closely to Randy than to himself.

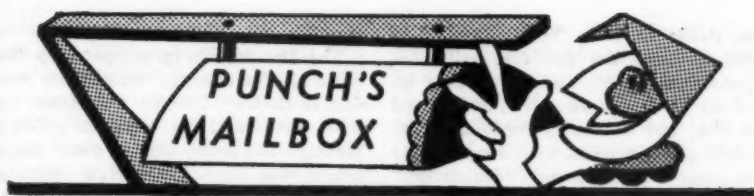
"It's natural for them to like the dummy. There's some magnetism about him I can't understand . . . They know I'm making him talk, but it's hard for them to realize all the time that he's not really talking."

Reynold's had some practical experience when he used the figure in his presentation during his service as an Army Education and Information specialist, so he has faith in his system's effectiveness. Randy will help him induce creative art, promote handicraft and induce creative thinking.

When Glenn Cargyle was a kid in Independence, Missouri, they couldn't keep him away from a ventriloquist show. So intrigued was Glenn with the apparent magic of the art that he began studying ventriloquism himself, and eventually mastered it. But he couldn't find just the right dummy to work with — either they were too clumsy, or their mouths refused to move naturally, so he began making dummies himself as a hobby.

Today he has turned this hobby into a big business. Still in his late twenties and still a student at Los Angeles State College where he's working for a master's degree, Glenn turns out dummies for many of the 1,000 professional ventriloquists in America. Among them is "Harry The Great Lester," teacher of Edgar Bergen. His latest big job was making the dummies used by Danny Kaye in his new Paramount film, "Knock on Wood." Glenn fashioned these — seven of them — out of sponge rubber, plaster, paint, strings, and wood, so that their eyebrows and eyes move realistically, their ears wiggle, and their mouths made of rubber rather than the customary wood, appear especially lifelike. He spent 164 hours making the first of these lifelike "dolls" for Danny. The others didn't take so long. His bill was 800 dollars each.

He makes about 16 dummies a month for his ventriloquist clients, and has little difficulty in paying his college tuition.



Rod Young—Punch's Mailbox, Box 14, University of Richmond, Virginia

After all the excitement and whirlwind activities of the Christmas season, Mr. Punch and his compatriots settled down and started a long list of resolutions for the new year. If you were one who resolved to rise rapidly to greater heights in our particular medium of interest, more power to you! Particularly today, when puppetry is so prominent in the public eye, we need to set our standards higher than ever before. The P. of A. can serve as an interchange of thoughts, standards, ideas and ideals. The action and vigor of Punch coupled with the beauty and art of the marionette can certainly retain the respect and recognition that has long been the basis for our interest. However, as a standing resolution, why not evaluate your technique and craftsmanship during the years ahead and strive to make American puppetry a respected and revered art.

It's not too early. Start making plans now for the happiest week of inspirational and puppetful fun offered anywhere. The National Festival is an experience none should miss. Mr. Punch and I are going to be in charge of the exhibit and you will want to have a real part in it. Let us know what you can contribute for the Festival, June 28 thru July 1, plus the wonderful Workshop on July 2, 1955. We'll see you then at Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio.

We continue to hear joyful reverberations from the Detroit-Toronto Festival last fall. The Kingsland

Marionettes, Martin and Olga Stevens, Ed Johnson and Gary Jennings have all played to enthusiastic and responsive audiences. The Paul McPharlin Collection is probably the best gathering of puppet lore in the country, if not the world, and interest has never been so high among Detroiters with workshops and programs galore being offered. Keep it up Detroit!

The December issue of CHARM included a wonderful story with pictures about Bil and Cora Baird. "The Morning Show" lost a sure bet when CBS let their talented troupe go. The Baird's galumptious production of "Babes in Toyland" was a smashing success when broadcast in compatible color over NBC the week before Christmas. The grand feature picture in the NEW YORK TIMES plus good publicity elsewhere were fully justified by this production of the Victor Herbert operetta. Keep on the lookout for more of these top-notch color extravaganzas.

Before Punch's Mailbox began brimming with cheery Christmas greetings, we made note of several interesting items. Many of us regretfully saw an old favorite leave the airways when "Let's Pretend" concluded for the last time in the fall. We also noted with sadness the death of Clare Tree Major, long active with her Children's Theatre productions.

In a happier vein, Kathy Piper was a big success when Western College produced "Sleeping Beauty" in the fall. Shirley O'Donnell is conquering

new fields in New York City while Miles holds down the fort with his grandparents in Florida. You may be a great deal happier if you missed this one, but currently there is a recording going around by a Joan Weber who sings a song named "Marionette." A production of "Aladdin" was done under the guidance of Peg Blickle by her students at Ohio State. We were glad to see that Hazelle Rollins and her marionettes made the cover of an art education magazine around Christmas time. On the shelves of the biblical bookstores are some interesting, simple Bible puppet cutouts for Sunday School use.

Grace Drysdale performed admirably with her hand puppet act at the Palace Theatre in New York in October. Vic Charles played the Casino, Toronto, during the same month. Frank Still and his marionette show of Cleveland provided entertainment for children in Navarre, Ohio, in November.

Anna Wills, Washington, D. C., held a puppet workshop in February as part of a fine arts institute sponsored by the community for the benefit of volunteer workers working with welfare organizations. The Washington Jr. League is trouping their exciting new show once a week in their area.

Political cartoonist C. E. Larson utilized puppetry in one of his recent cartoons showing Malik taking over Vishinsky's U. N. job but manipulated with the same old strings! The December issue of *READER'S DIGEST* had an article using this same sort of analogy.

Add Carolyn Gilbert's name to the "Kukla, Fran and Ollie" staff. She replaced Jack Fascinato at the piano when he moved west last fall. The elaborate and charming adaptation of James Thurber's *MANY MOONS* on Christmas Day was certainly a credit to Burr Tillstrom's genius. The settings for the hand puppets were tremendous and the new characterizations were

superb.

The Proctors keep puppetually busy circling the country with their wonderful shows. Prock's Christmas card with Santa and his reindeer galloping through the front seat of their puppet truck was priceless. New member, Anne Blower, Casper, Wyoming, has been doing jillions of interesting community services. The Children's Theatre of Casper will again emphasize puppetry when it is activated during the summer months. Lea and Gia Wallace have been working themselves to shreds doing exciting things with puppets in New York City. And here's a gem for anyone collecting old or foreign puppets. Herb Hosmer, Jr. recently unearthed quite a number of old Italian marionettes identified as "Marionette Snodale Infrangibili - Tipo di Lusso." Anyone interested in these rather small and inexpensive, extremely fascinating marionettes can inquire care of the Toy Cupboard Theatre, South Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Bob Youmans is the name of the fellow helping Pauline Benton in Hollywood with her Red Gate Shadow plays. Arvo Wirta is in New York City for the time being. Jim Menke writes of much Californian activity in puppetry. He did his show daily at Paris, San Mateo, during the pre-holiday weeks. Les and Ellie Heath continue to be very busy and successful and Jim reports helping them with marionettes for their production of "Three Billy Goats Gruff."

Jerry Juhl had a good story on his Menlo Marionettes in the *SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER* in November. The Salzburg Marionettes have covered the country. We have reports from Florida all the way to California and we know that for the Christmas season they moved to New York. They are using a revolving stage this year for their very elaborate scenic effects. Mr. Punch really is impressed when he reads statements like "the per-

manent ensemble consists of 10 operators and 700 marionettes with two operators assigned to each marionette to achieve the maximum of life-like action." This sort of quotation and others from newspaper blurbs around the country makes one appreciate all the more the wonders done by our husband and wife teams or the lone puppeteer.

Lettie Connell has now added an eighth character to her delightful "Looking Glass Lady" show. Around the middle of January she led a group of teenagers in producing puppet shows for the Oakland Recreation Department. She reports accidentally seeing a colorful short film in honor of Edison and the electric light done with stop motion figures and credit given Joop Geesink. There was to be publicity material in two national magazines this spring about the Recreation Department's trailer puppet theatre.

Marion Derby helped us tremendously with many puppetized news items and wrote enthusiastically of meeting the Yale Puppeteers at the Turnabout Theatre. The more we see and hear about California puppetry, the more excited we get. Wish more on the West coast could manage to get to Festivals. Bob Clampett must be setting some sort of record with four different hand puppet shows on KTTV. In addition to his ever popular "Time for Beany," he does a 15 minute daily lunchtime show, "Buffalo Billy," and two shows designed for both adult and moppet viewing, "Thunderbolt the Wondercolt" and "The Willy the Wolf Show." The star of the latter, aired once a week, has a large, expressive rubber head with moveable jaw operated by one of the puppeteer's hands. The puppeteer's other hand, encased in a four fingered glove, is one of Willy's hands. In case he needs the use of two, someone else around the studio steps in to provide the helping hand! Credit for these shows

goes to Clampett, Don Vessig, Lloyd Turner, Joan Gardner, Bill Overland, Harold Helverson, Kris Allen, Jim McGeorge and Naomi Natell. That makes three puppeteers named "Naomi" we've discovered in the past year!

A morning show on KRCA, this is still California, is "Uncle Archie." The show revolves around a pleasant fellow and his friend, Chico, a marionette clown manipulated by Russ Clark. Harry Burnett's picture graced the LOS ANGELES TIMES in November. He is quite an accomplished comedian and actor at the Turnabout Theatre besides playing his role of puppet impressario. Ralph Chesse also likes the legitimate theatre, and like many of us, steps occasionally from behind the masking curtains. Producer of the successful "Brother Buzz," he took a buzz-man's holiday last fall and played King Edward in the San Francisco State College production of "Richard III."

The Woman's page of the LOS ANGELES TIMES really went wild when they printed a gigantic spread of pictures of children and marionettes. The occasion was a Doll Fair where the Jr. League of Los Angeles was to present their version of "Punch and Judy." Rene Zendejas was shown manipulating some of the exciting marionettes and we'd like to know more about them.

The late Tony Sarg and his world of enchantment were long favorites of the American public. Tony's daughter for many years has operated a gift shop bearing his name in New Hope, Pennsylvania. Emphasis is not on puppetry, but some of the oldest Sarg Collection puppets are on display. Mrs. Quentin Sternbergh, a Jr. League puppet enthusiast, has announced the opening of another new gift shop in Reading, Pa.

Down in Augusta, Georgia, Bill Tennent has kept things hopping with his daily TV show, "Hippity Hop,"

seen on WRDW. A little higher on the map, in Atlanta, Don and Ruth Gilpin keep "Woody Willow" going strong and rating high by taking him on adventures into outer space and other such scintillating things! The Richmond, Virginia, Jr. League is doing "Hansel and Gretel" while the Brook Run Woman's Club members have sponsored a series of performances of "Bluebeard." Having returned from Myerburg's "Hansel and Gretel" recently, we were a little sorry that more attention wasn't given to clarification and coherence in scripting, but on the whole it was delightful and seems to be making the movies rounds most successfully.

From the Home office of Encyclopedia Britannica Films, Wilmette, Illinois, one can obtain their catalogue listing a film on making puppets by Frank and Elizabeth Haines or a color version of "Little Red Riding Hood," a Wahmann hand puppet production. Athena Films, 165 West 46th Street, New York City, carries the roster of films by the Stevens. "The Santa Claus Suit" is their latest and is an entertaining film about moral and spiritual values.

The Metropolitan Marionettes passed through Richmond several times and we have had wonderful visits in recent months. Teaching courses in puppetry here at the University of Richmond has been most rewarding and stimulating creatively. Our fall production of "Aladdin" was followed by a Christmas adaptation of the "Littlest Angel" produced with marionettes and rod puppets as a benefit for the United Nations Children's Fund. January and February found us also teaching an adult course in simplified puppetry one evening a week at the Richmond YWCA. Party shows and occasional TV appearances, plus a heavy schedule of study at the University keeps us pleasantly pushed, but as long as it's puppetry, we love it! The world at large is cordially invited

to drop in at our University Puppet Studios at your first opportunity.

Even with the cards of Christmas, Punch's mailbox hasn't been packed as it should be. We need your help, for without it we are nothing. For goodness sake, don't be shy and hide your talents, but drop us proof of your existence. Robert Browning in part IV of PIPPA PASSES wrote that "All service ranks the same with God: With God, whose puppets, best and worst, are we; there is no last nor first." Let's hear from you!

Rod Young
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